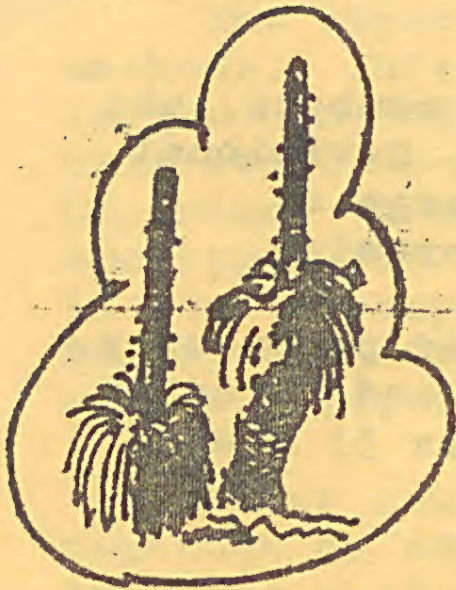


BALLARAT FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

EXCURSION/NEWS SHEET - APRIL 1978



President-	Mr. G. Binns	Ph. 323670
Vice-Pres-	Mr. R. Borch	428630
Secretary-	Miss H. Burgess	312210
Treasurer-	Mr. S. Reynolds	327721
Committee-	Mrs. P. Murphy	323289
	Mrs. S. Bedggood	322548
	Mrs. B. Gray	322130
	Mr. P. Fry	326454
	Mr. L. Fink	861319
	Dr. F. Harrap	301651

Editorial Panel- Mrs. S. Bedggood, Mrs. B. Gray, G. Binns

MEETINGS held in the Administrative Building at the School of Mines, Lydiard St. Sth. first Friday of each month at 8 p.m.

MEETING- 7th April. Mr. R. Allen. Subject "Survival in the Insect World"

MEETING- 5th May - To be decided.

APRIL EXCURSION- We are not holding our usual excursion on the Sunday following April meeting. Instead of this, all members are invited to join the Bird Observer's Club for a week-end at Melville Caves 15th-16th April, for a survey of the north central area. On both days B.O.C. members will be available at the camp site at 9 a.m. and between 12 and 1 p.m. to direct people to the areas to be surveyed. The only main picnic area where water and toilets are available is where the group intends to camp. Further particulars or directions available from B.F.N.C. secretary or president.

MAY EXCURSIONS- 7th MAY- Nerrin Nerrin and Wongan. Leaving Crockers at 9.30 a.m.

Saturday 20th MAY- Lake Wendouree - Half day.

ANNUAL MEETING- 3rd March, 1978.

There was an excellent attendance of members, and several visitors, including Mr. J Channon, Divisional Forester, and Dr. J. Edgar, officer in charge of Silviculture at the Victorian School of Forestry, Creswick.

Office bearers for the year are listed previously, membership fees remain at \$2.50 per adult and 50 cents for students. The membership at present is 51 adults and 6 juniors.

ARMILLARIA FUNGUS.

A very interesting talk on Armillaria fungus was given by Dr. J. Edgar at the March meeting.

Armillaria fungus causes Dieback in Eucalypts and causes a great deal of concern to the Forest Commission. Dr. Edgar is a forest commission Scientist working in conjunction with the C.S. I.R.O.

Armillaria is a root rolling fungus and is part of the natural Eco system; it is part of the natural aging of forest trees. It was first noticed in the Mt. Cole area in 1950 when more trees than normal were affected. However it was not until 1975 that work was started on a study of Armillaria.

Armillaria is distinct from Phytophthora cinnamomi, and does not appear as a free spore in the earth. It can spread from infected to free roots, this however is not common. Also sporing bodies may pass some infection, this also is not common. The most common means is contact of infected roots with other roots, there is a high frequency of root infection. Armillaria needs the food reserves from that tree in the form of Carbohydrates, when it gets more food than it needs it therefore spreads into new areas. Trees harvested in the forest leave stumps and this means more food. Therefore remove the stumps. This may mean clear felling in future and either pushing the stumps out or finding a chemical
2. that will rot them.

The experiments at Mt. Cole will try all these methods. This area is second growth having been logged since 1900 for timber and fire wood. As there will still be roots left, possible ripping will also be tried. The armillaria is not noticeable in young eucalypts for about 30 or 40 years. As Pinus radiata is very susceptible, it is proposed to plant pines for up to 5 years and then remove them. Pines are susceptible, for up to 80% will become infected.

Other countries have this same problem which is regarded as serious. We might say that we are still learning what happens when we change the environment.

L. Fink.

VICTORIAN F.N.C. ANNUAL MEETING

Several members of our Club attended this meeting, held at Creswick on Labor Day week-end. Mr. Albert Perry of Creswick Club is the President. Members enjoyed a visit to the Springmount property of Mr. Alan Sonsee. A stop was made to view the many gold-fields which once operated in the district, some claimed to be the richest alluvial deep leads in the world.

A trip was made to the Gold Battery, followed by a drive through Forest Commission plantations burnt out in February 1977 fires. Slatey Creek was also visited, and an inspection made of the Victorian Forests Commission Nursery, Parklands and a 5 hectare arboretum.

CAMP-OUT REMINDERS:

W.V.F.N.C.A. CAMP-OUT - Castlemaine - Vaughan Springs area - 22nd - 23rd April 1978. Particulars available from any committee member.

Warrnambool Camp-Out - 26th/27th August 1978.

W.V.F.N.C.A. Camp-Out Snake Valley, 21/22nd October, Hosted by Ballarat Field Naturalists's Club.

DUCK SHOOTING REPORT.

For some years our Fisheries and Wildlife officer John Clements has had a policy of inviting a member of the Club to be an observer on his morning rounds on the opening day of the duck shooting season. This year was no exception.

Weather on the opening day was disappointing for the hunters, but a bonus for the birds. Strong winds and misty rain made outdoor conditions unpleasant and put the odds heavily in favor of the ducks. The number of shooters was down in the Ballarat area as was the number of birds bagged. A check of about 100 shooters on swamps and lakes in the vicinity of Burrumbeet revealed a tally of 32 Black Duck, 23 Grey Teal, 10 Wood Duck, 6 Chestnut Breasted Shelduck (Mountain Duck), 4 Hard-head, 3 Pink-Eared Duck and one Bluebilled Duck (confiscated).

There was a dramatic decline in the number of protected species shot. Whereas last year several hunters were found with coots and waterfowl in their possession, none were evident this year. Last year several swans were killed. This year there was only one swan death reported, and was confirmed. Although Maryborough Field Naturalists found a distressing number of protected birds shot at Cairn Curran there was no evidence of this in the Burrumbeet area. A number of the people checked had been prosecuted in other years, and had a clean "bill" this year. There were many protected birds on the lake and swamps, ranging from grebes to pelicans, but these were unharmed and to a certain extent undisturbed.

M. Rotheram.

INSECTS !!!

There are more than 750,000 insects, found in almost every part of the world, and the majority are adept at camouflage. Some, like the stick insects, are almost invisible on their chosen plant. Many of the tropical beetles, though brilliant in colour, blend in perfectly with brightly coloured flowers and so escape the attention of predators. Others assume leaf-like shapes which completely deceive the naked eye.

MARCH EXCURSION

Last excursion was to Canadian Forest to which 8 car loads attended. Entering the forest via Boundary Road from Eureka Street, it was sad to see the litter dumped in the undergrowth.

The first stop was near the service basin on the pipe line from Bungai Dam. Peppermint and stringy-bark with an understorey of golden wattle predominated. Some grass tree was noted after traversing Boundary Road southwards for some distance through young pines. Good views of Ballarat were seen and to our surprise a large Black-faced Wallaby made a hurried entry into the pines. At one spot a number of fox carcasses hung on the fence and a lone fox was seen disappearing into the undergrowth.

Opportunity was taken to walk some distance into the forest where it was noted how dry the area was. Again peppermint and stringy-bark predominated. Very little bird life was seen. A large fungi was found, formation of which showed a very crazed cap with a ragged edge and pores instead of gills, the top being a light brown and underneath bright yellow could be seen. Hora and Lange's book on fungi gave no clue other than *Boletus*, so reference was made to Rinaldi and Tyndato Fungi where the nearest reference was to *Boletus crocipodius*, but there were still differences. As it deteriorated too quickly, the fungi could not be sent to Melbourne for positive identification.

As a finale to the day opportunity was taken to inspect the proposed site of the new Technical-High School at Mt. Clear.

Despite a rather husky throat, the excursion was ably led by Mr. G. Binns.

P. Fry.

LIND NATIONAL PARK IN DANGER.

I noticed the following article in the March edition of the Bird Observer, and thought it is quite essential that as many members as possible write to the Premier and express their concern at the proposed logging of the Lind National Park. It seems strange indeed that in its final recommendations the Land Conservation Council has decided that the Lind National Park be revoked and opened up to extensive logging.

We went to the Lind National Park many years ago and were very impressed with the area. As so much of East Gippsland has been clear-felled or logged it is of greater importance now, and will be much more valuable in the future. Please write to the Premier, as suggested by Reg. Johnson.

Contributed by S. Bedggood.

LIND NATIONAL PARK IN DANGER: by Reg. Johnson in "The Bird Observer." March 1978.

During the Christmas BOC Camp, every visitor and camper visited the Lind National Park at some time or other. Here the fortunate ones were able to hear the Cicada-bird, a rare bird in Victoria, and every visitor should have seen the Rose robin attending its nest and feeding young. Opportunities to observe the Rose robin are limited enough to make this an event. While visiting the Lind National Park, visitors came to appreciate its overall value as habitat, without knowing that this area is something special - it is one of the few East Gippsland areas which has not been subject to timber-getting for thirty years or more.

In its Final Recommendations for East Gippsland, the Land Conservation Council has proposed that this National Park be revoked and opened up to logging, with only cosmetic strips of untouched habitat left along the roads. The overall loss of habitat must certainly reduce the population of bird species, which depend on untouched forests. It is little wonder that timber interests want to cash in on Lind's magnificent forests,

but it is hard to understand why the L.C.C. is prepared to surrender an existing National Park in exchange for large tracts of different habitat nearer the coast, where, oddly enough, the timber is of poor quality.

Whether the Land Conservation Council recommendation is implemented depends on the decision of government, which is being lobbied by those who want to reduce East Gippsland to one large tree-farm. Anyone who is as concerned about the future of Lind National Park as I am should write to: The Honorable R. J. Hamer, E.D., M.P., Premier of Victoria, Premier's Office, Public Offices, Melbourne, 3002.

Some points worth mentioning, preferably in your own words, are:

1. The L.C.C. East Gippsland Report rated the district of high nature conservation significance and potential. Lind is even more valuable because the surrounding country has been logged for many years.

2. The objects of the National Parks Act include "the preservation and protection of the natural environment". To revoke even one park would mean that any park could improve under "preservation and protection" until it, too, attracted pressure for the use of its timber.

3. The revocation of Lind would break faith with the world-wide acceptance that National Parks are for the people for all time.

4. The extensive timber harvesting envisaged for most of East Gippsland would enhance the value of Lind as an untouched island for study and nature conservation.

5. Timber harvesting would have a detrimental effect on the gullies through increased run-off, siltation and accumulation of debris.

6. Alternatively, you may simply state that you think Lind National Park is a valuable habitat and

vegetation sample, which should be retained.

In making this suggestion, I am influenced by my knowledge of the need for conservationists to counter the barrage of pressures on Government, from those whose only aim is to exploit Lind and our other forests.
Reg. Johnson.

PHOTOFLORA '78.

Just on 200 people attended the showing of 204 nature slides, making a successful evening for Ballarat Field Naturalists' Club, at the Assembly Hall, Ballarat North Technical School on 20th March.

Mrs. Stella Bedggood is to be congratulated for having 3 slides accepted, i.e., a delightful study of the grey fantail, one of S.A. river red gums, and a study of a brown Marsupial Mouse and young. Some others in our area who had slides accepted were Mrs. P. Adams and L. O. Adams of Wendouree; Lyle Courtney of Maryborough; Mrs. C. D. Watkins and Rob Watkins of Bendigo; Mrs. Bon Strange, Ballarat; and R. G. Smart, Golden Square. 131 persons entered a total of 1143 slides, of which 204 were accepted for showing.

The four sections for slides accepted were Victorian Wildflowers; Australian Wildflowers; Australian Birds; and In the Bush with a Camera. A wide variety of very beautiful and interesting studies was shown.

A successful trading table of native plants was held for the Linton fund. Financial details of the evening will be given at a later date.
